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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAHLA/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUCNFB/FBI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L WINDHOEK 000030

SIPDIS

FOR STATE ISN/CTR AND PM/ISO/PMAT (24/7)  
FOR DS/IP/SPC/WMD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/02/2019  
TAGS: [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [KCRM](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [WA](#)  
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: NUCLEAR SMUGGLING INCIDENT/DRILL

REF: A. 2007 STATE 162091  
[1](#)B. PELLETREAU/MATHIEU EMAIL JAN. 30 2009

Classified By: Ambassador G. Dennise Mathieu for reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

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Summary  
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[1](#)1. (C) At the request of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Post wishes to alert the Department and Washington agencies -- per reftel -- that it has received a report indicating an unannounced (and as yet unconfirmed) drill designed to simulate the discovery of illicit radiological material and plans to make a dirty bomb. Post was not/not contacted by Namibian authorities. This report was sent to post by the Department of State's Namibia desk officer, who had been notified by the NRC. The NRC received a call on January 29 from a company that claimed it had been notified of the discovery of Cesium 137 in Namibia and the plans for a dirty bomb. The caller to the NRC later stated the incident was a drill. Post has been unable to confirm any of the information regarding the possible incident/drill. We are continuing to investigate. End Summary.

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Details of the incident  
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[1](#)2. (C) On January 30, Post was informed by the State Department's Namibia desk officer that, on January 29 at 2:00pm EST, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) hotline received a call from Chemtrek, a hazmat and radiological clean up company that operates in the United States. The Chemtrek office was on the line with a Namibian fire safety/police officer calling from Namibia. The Namibian, Turk Cloete, said there had been a car accident in Vandyke and that field officers had discovered a radiological substance (Cesium 137) and plans to build a "dirty bomb" in the vehicle. The Namibian used the term "dirty bomb." Chemtrek decided to call the NRC because of the dirty bomb reference.

[1](#)3. (C) The NRC suggested Mr. Cloete contact Axel Tibinyane in the Namibian Ministry of Health's Radiation Protection Service Group. As the NRC was preparing to alert the inter-agency, Mr. Cloete said he had just been informed that the incident was a drill and that he should not have called the NRC. He apologized profusely and hung up. NRC decided to stand down on the inter-agency alert, but called the State Department's Namibia desk officer to ensure State was informed.

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Incident Follow-up  
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14. (C) On January 30, Emboff contacted Mr. Tibinyane in the Namibian Ministry of Health to try to learn additional details. Tibinyane told us that he was unaware of the alleged exercise, but that he would undertake an investigation to determine what may have occurred. He was not familiar with Mr. Cloete or Chemtrek. He noted that similar drills are routinely conducted in Namibia but in coordination with the IAEA, and that his office is normally involved when a drill is conducted.

15. (C) Separately, Post's RSO reached out to a senior police Commissioner, who said neither he nor his staff had received any reports of a radiological detection drill. The police are not familiar with a town called Vandyke, the location cited in the alleged drill.

16. (C) Post will continue to investigate the incident. Action officer at post for handling this incident is Econoff Frank DeParis, reachable via phone at 261 61 295-8549 or email at deparisf(at)state.gov.  
MATHIEU